

Chipilo Venetian dialect

Chipilo Venetian, or **Chipileño**, is a diaspora language currently spoken by the descendants of some five hundred 19th century immigrants to Mexico from the Veneto region of Northeastern Italy. The immigrants settled in the State of Puebla, founding the city of Chipilo. The language is also spoken in Mexico in communities in Veracruz and Querétaro, places where the *chipileños* settled as well.

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History

Immigrants mainly from the comune of Segusino, some 60 km northwest of Venice, arrived in 1868, at which point contact with speakers of the language in its homeland and elsewhere was reduced to near nil. The community maintained its unique culture and language as a linguistic enclave, in contact with Nahuan languages and Spanish. Although the city of Puebla has grown to almost absorb it, the town of Chipilo remained isolated for much of the 20th century. Thus, the *chipileños*, unlike other European immigrants that came to Mexico, did not absorb much of the Mexican culture, retaining most of their traditions and their language. The variant of the Venetan language spoken by the *chipileños* is the northern Traixàn-Fheltrìn-Belumàt of Segusino, Treviso. It has barely altered through contact with Spanish, compared to the language shift occurring in northern Veneto of Italy.

There have been several attempts to establish a writing system for the language spoken in Chipilo. One such system was created by Carolyn McKay, an American linguist who conducted postgraduate research at the Universidad de las Américas. Her proposed system, entirely based on the Italian alphabet, was published in a book entitled *Il dialetto veneto di Segusino e Chipilo*. This system has been used in some publications made by Cipilàn/*chipileños*, but it has not received wide acceptance, because of the striking differences between Venetan and Italian orthographic representation of phonemes. Most of the speakers use the Spanish system they learn at school, even though it does not have letters for specific sounds such as the voiced-S (written ⟨x⟩ in modern Venetan), or the [θ] (written ⟨th⟩ in modern Venetan), and [ð] (written ⟨dh⟩ in modern Venetan). Nevertheless, Eduardo Montagner, an Italo-Mexican from Chipilo, has suggested the standardization of a writing system based on the Spanish alphabet. In response to this, MacKay developed a system based on the Spanish orthography, which she presents in her Spanish book "El Véneto de Segusino y Chipilo" (2017), in which she states that one of the issues of orthography development is the problem of finding one that is comprehensive. For linguists it is important that each sound is represented by a symbol

Chipilo Venetian	
Chipileño	
Native to	Mexico
Native speakers	2,500 (2011) ^[1]
Language family	<div>Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Italic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Romance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gallo-Romance<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gallo-Italic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Venetian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chipilo Venetian</div>
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	–
Glottolog	<i>None</i>

(or letter) that distinguishes from others; nevertheless, a phonetic transcription would have to use symbols that are alien to those who are not linguists. Kay's transcription adopts a simple to use orthography which also maintains necessary distinctions. For use in Chipilo an Italian-based orthography is not used, instead one based principally on Spanish is in use. This is also easier to use on a keyboard, without numerous diacritic marks, e.g. 'ñent' (nothing) which in an Italian-based orthography would be rendered 'gnent' and thus not familiar to Chipileños. Some considerations:^[2]

a) the grave accent is used with è and ò to indicate that the pronunciation of the vowel is open, e.g. [ɛ] spècho (mirror) and [ɔ] stòrder (twist);

b) the acute accent is used to indicate an undetermined tonic accent

c) 'zh' is used to indicate the voiceless dental fricative (θ) e.g. giazh (ice)

d) 'ch' is used to represent the voiceless postalveolar affricate (tʃ) e.g. chacholar (converse), ranch (spider) or schec (cheese)

e) 'ge' or 'gi' is used for the voiced postalveolar affricate (dʒ) which does not exist in Spanish orthpgraphy. Thus, Chipileño Veneto orthography follows the Italian model in this respect e.g. génderna (nit), giazh (ice), giozh (drop) or giust (right)

f) 'que' or 'qui' represent the voiceless velar stop (k) when followed by 'e' or 'i' and with 'c' when followed by 'a', 'o', and 'u'. This follows the Spanish model e.g. quizha (glandular inflammation), cavar su (tear), bianc (white)

g) 'gue' and 'gui' represent the voiced velar stop (g) when followed by 'e' and 'i' and 'g' when followed by 'a', 'o', and 'u' e.g. guirla (swirl), galozhada (kick), góder (enjoy), guzá (sharp)

h) represents the semiconsonant (j/y) when it is in a clear consonantal position e.g. yozha (drop), it does not form part of a diphthong.

Chipileño Veneto Orthography

Chipileño Veneto, like all languages that don't have a current written tradition, is confronted with various issues. One of those issues is the problem of finding a comprehensive orthography. For linguists it is important that each sound is represented by a symbol (or letter) that distinguishes from others; nevertheless, a phonetic transcription would have to use symbols that are alien to those who are not linguists. Kay's transcription adopts a simple to use orthography which also maintains necessary distinctions. In Chipilo an Italian-based orthography is not used, instead one based principally on Spanish is preferred. This is easier to use on a keyboard, and the familiarity of graphemes used for Spanish reduces the possibility of confusion. For example, to represent the palatal nasal /ɲ/ in the word meaning 'nothing', Italian norms require a digraph, thus *gnent*, whereas the Spanish system provides a uniquely interpretable single grapheme familiar to Chipileños schooled in Mexico: *ñent*.

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Vowels

ORTHOGRAPHY	PRONUNCIATION (IPA)	CHIPILO VÉNETO	SPANISH	ITALIAN	ENGLISH
a	[a]	adès	ahora	adesso	now
e	[e]	vert	verde	verde	green
è	[ɛ]	vèrt	abierto	aperto	open
i	[i]	instès	lo mismo	lo stesso	the same
o	[o]	vodo	vacio	vuoto	empty
ò	[ɔ]	còt	cocido	cotto	cooked
u	[u]	uvi	huevos	uova	eggs

Consonants

ORTHOGRAPHY	PRONUNCIATION (IPA)	CHIPILO VÉNETO	SPANISH	ITALIAN	ENGLISH
b	[b]	baset	bajito	basso (diminutive)	shortish
c	[k]	calt	caliente	caldo	hot
c	[k]	zhonc	hongo	fungo	mushroom
c	[k]	cuant	cuanto	quanto	how much
qui/que	[ki, ke]	qui	quien	chi	who
ch	[t͡ʃ]	cheza	iglesia	chiesa	church
ch	[t͡ʃ]	pedòcho	piojo	pidocchio	louse
d	[ð]	mèdo	medio	mezzo	medium
f	[f]	fogo	fuego	fuoco	fire
g	[g]	gucha	suéter	maglione	sweater
gui/gue	[gi, ge]	brague	pantalones	pantaloni	trousers
gi/ge	[d͡ʒ]	gelos	celoso	geloso	jealous
gi/ge	[d͡ʒ]	giazh	hielo	ghiaccio	ice
l	[l]	laorar	trabajar	lavorare	to work
m	[m]	mare	madre	madre	mother
n	[n]	naranzha	naranja	arancia	orange
ñ	[ɲ]	ñir	venir	venire	come
p	[p]	poaret	pobrecito	poverino	poor
r	[r]	reoltar	revolver	mescolare	mix
s	[s]	sántola	madrina	madrina	godmother
s	[s]	filos	afilado	affilato	sharp
s	[s]	cusí	así	così	thus
s	[s]	mascho	macho	maschio	male
s	[z]	sbayar	ladrar	abbaiare	to bark
t	[t]	techa	cacerola	padella	pan
v	[v, b]	volp	zorra	cagna	bitch
y	[j, y]	yeya	tia	zia	aunt
z	[z]	paeze	pueblo	paese	village
zh	[θ]	zhúquero	azúcar	zucchero	sugar

See also

- [Italian Mexican](#)
- [Talian dialect \(Brazilian Venetian\)](#)
- [Venetian language](#)

References

1. Venetian (Mexico) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/vec/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. MACKAY, Carolyn J. (2017). *VENETO DE SEGUSINO Y CHIPILO, EL FONOLOGIA GRAMATICA LEXICO VENETO ESPANOL ITALIANO ~ INGLES*. Mexico: Benemerita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). pp. 35–38. ISBN 978-607-525-483-8.
3. MACKAY, CAROLYN J. (1992). "Language maintenance in Chipilo: a Veneto dialect in Mexico". *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. **96** (1). doi:10.1515/ijsl.1992.96.129 (<https://doi.org/10.1515%2Fijsl.1992.96.129>). ISSN 0165-2516 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0165-2516>).

External links

- (in Spanish) [Chipilo Venetian dialect](https://web.archive.org/web/20110606110821/http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/Venetan/Dialects/Chipilo.html) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20110606110821/http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/Venetan/Dialects/Chipilo.html>) by Eduardo Montagner

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